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**WASHINGTON COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE HIGHLIGHTS SUCCESS OF  
RAPID FITNESS TO PROCEED PROGRAM**

HILLSBORO, Ore- In 2020, the Washington County District Attorney's Office helped launch the Rapid Fitness to Proceed program which is designed to increase the efficiency of the fitness to proceed process. Since its inception, the program has reduced the pre-trial jail time for defendants with mental health disorders which has saved millions in taxpayer dollars. This office is pleased to report the program was successful again in 2023.

In 2023, there were 100 successful fitness determinations. The median time to make those determinations was just 17 days, down from 91 days under the state's system. On average, this increased efficiency helped save 74 days of jail time served per defendant, leading to a total approximate savings of more than \$1,932,214.00 to the taxpayer.

"I'm proud to see that once again our Washington County Rapid Fitness to Proceed program has produced amazing results," said Washington County District Attorney Kevin Barton. "This collaborative program ensures people receive mental health evaluations sooner while saving money and resources for our community. This program should be a model for the entire state."

Under Oregon law, when the court has reason to doubt a defendant's fitness to proceed by reason of incapacity due to a qualifying mental disorder, the court may order an examination to determine whether the defendant is unable to understand the nature of the proceedings, assist and cooperate with their attorney, or participate in the defense. Commonly referred to as an "Aid and Assist," "Fitness to Proceed" or a competency evaluation, this process can take months to complete, which creates costly delays and inefficiencies. Under the Rapid Fitness to Proceed program, the timeline has been reduced from months to weeks. This increased efficiency benefits all participants as defendants arrested for lower-level crimes will spend less time in jail pre-trial, thereby freeing up limited jail space for more dangerous offenders. It also increases the efficiency of the courts and provides cost savings for the entire public safety system in Washington County.

The Rapid Fitness to Proceed program accomplishes this increased efficiency by establishing partnerships with two private practices that specialize in forensic competency to stand trial evaluations, NW Forensic Institute and Lithia Forensics and Consulting. These certified forensic evaluators are trusted by the defense and the state. In fact, in some situations, these private evaluators also work on contract for the Oregon State Hospital to provide competency

evaluations. Using this public-private partnership, expedited evaluations are typically produced within 12 days from the date the referral is accepted.

“The massive success of the Rapid Fitness to Proceed program in Washington County has helped to move defendants through the court system more quickly, reducing jail time and helping to get them into much-needed treatment promptly,” said Washington County Circuit Court Presiding Judge Rebecca Guptill. “This is beneficial in multiple ways – it helps defendants to get treatment that they need rather than sit in jail, it frees up jail space for those who should really be in custody, it also frees up defense attorneys more quickly to represent other defendants who are in need of counsel, and it helps both defendants and victims to achieve resolution of their cases in a more timely fashion. As a result, the Rapid Fitness to Proceed program is a huge benefit to our court and our community.”

The Washington County Sheriff’s Office is also a key partner in this effort.

“The Rapid Fitness to Proceed program has proven beneficial to the Adults in Custody of the Washington County Jail,” Washington County Sheriff Caprice Massey said. “By expediting the process for these individuals to access therapeutic treatment settings, we have prevented unnecessary languishing in jail. This collaborative effort has produced healthier, Justice Involved Individuals who are ready for a successful transition into our community.”

This program would also not be possible without the support of Washington County Behavioral Health.

“Because of this program’s effectiveness, many adults with the greatest behavioral needs are now able to get much-needed treatment at the State hospital more quickly,” said Robert Colpean, Aid and Assist program coordinator with Washington County Behavioral Health. “We attribute much of this program’s success to collaborative efforts among key partners who work to find solutions on both individual cases as well as on a systemwide level.”

To learn more about this program and to access a referral form needed to initiate an evaluation, [visit our website](#).